

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, budget projections can be wrong. They often are. But I am also particularly concerned about the CBO report that forecast a several-trillion dollar deficit over the next 10 years. That is the highest level as a percentage of GDP since World War II.

To be clear, this deficit is driven by spending. We did what we had to do to protect our homeland and give our troops the support they need in the war on terror. But we also spent a lot more in other nondefense areas; and when we add increased government spending to an economic slowdown and the 9-11 attacks, we get deficits. There is no way around it.

Fortunately, the tax relief passed by this Congress and signed by the President has stimulated our economy. Now we have to turn our attention to getting government spending under control. We need to tighten our belts a little around here and do the right thing. We should freeze spending and balance the budget as early as we can. We need to get to work to cut the deficit, cut spending, and balance the budget.

BRING OUR BUDGET IN BALANCE WITH OUR PRIORITIES

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in today's number reporting a deficit \$500 billion, a historic number, it goes to prove that we cannot fight three wars with three tax cuts, having now produced a record deficit in the economy.

And what we need now is a balanced budget that is in balance with our priorities. Not all government spending is good, and not all tax cuts lead to the same economic benefit. We need a strategy and an agenda that brings our budget into balance with our priorities, where we can make sure that Americans can afford the education and the health care for their children that they need as well as make sure that we have the security and the investments in our defense that we need. And as we lay out our agenda and understand where we are as a country and the priorities, I think that today's deficit proves that while the economy is supposedly growing, the deficit should be going down, not going up. And the reason it is going up is because we neither have a strategy nor the priorities that are correct for this country and for the future of our country. So we must once again dedicate ourselves to the principle of bringing the budget into balance, in balance with our priorities.

TIME TO PUT OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the time has come for Congress to put our fiscal house in order.

This week the Congressional Budget Office released its economic and budget projections showing budget deficits over the next decade including nearly \$500 billion for fiscal year 2004.

The American people know about the deficits. The American people also, however, know that this President inherited a recession, experienced and bravely led us through a national emergency and has led America into the war on terror; and these have all taken their toll. Having mostly, however, cleared these historic challenges, I believe that in the coming budget debate, the Republican majority must again demonstrate its commitment to fiscal discipline and limited government. The time has come for Congress to put our fiscal house in order again. We must resist the siren call to raise taxes, which our Democrat friends will bring to this floor again and again; put our fiscal house in order by holding the line on spending, renewing our commitment to limited government and fiscal discipline, which are true Republican values of the majority.

CONGRATULATING THE CAROLINA PANTHERS

(Mr. WATT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate our Carolina Panthers on going to the Super Bowl. I want to congratulate the owner, Jerry Richardson, and the other owners, Coach Fox, and the members of the team for their outstanding job they have done during the course of this year and cheer them on to victory in the Super Bowl.

It is amazing how something like this can bring a community together even in the face of adverse economy and job loss and deficits. This has been a rallying point for our community, and I applaud the Carolina Panthers and wish them well as they go on to the Super Bowl in Houston this weekend.

JOB GROWTH

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, to counter my friend, not in the area of football but on the issue of jobs, we all know that the economy is growing; but we continue to hear this argument that we are slow in the area of job growth.

We have seen the report yesterday of a dramatic increase in consumer confidence, the highest levels since mid-2002. Obviously, productivity is at unprecedented levels. Investment is higher. Fifty percent of the American people are members of the investment class. And the market is over 10,600.

So the interesting thing for us to note is that as we look at this job creation issue, it is important for us to observe that what we have regularly found is that the Department of Labor's payroll survey is the one that has been reporting not tremendous job growth. We must look at the household survey, which has shown that there have been 1.9 million new jobs created during this administration since November of 2001. It is important that while this rhetoric of jobless recovery is constantly put out there, the household survey takes into consideration something that the payroll survey does not, and that is the self-employed, those who are creating jobs in the private sector on their own. So it is important for us to responsibly look at these numbers, Mr. Speaker.

URGING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 2166, PUBLIC SAFETY EX-OFFENDER SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT OF 2003

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest last week as the President gave his State of the Union address and was quite pleased at one point when he mentioned the need to establish programs for ex-offenders, for people returning home after having been incarcerated. And I could not agree with him more.

So I urge my colleagues to get on board with me and support H.R. 2166, my Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act, which is designed to build 100,000 units of SRO-type housing for these individuals over a 5-year period.

If we really want to help people returning home from prison, let us start by giving them a place to stay.

RECOGNIZING JAY KISLAK

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Jay Kislak, an outstanding member of the South Florida community.

Jay is the chairman of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation, which is engaged in a collection of rare books, manuscripts, maps, and indigenous art of the Americas.

Through his foundation, Jay has worked to ensure that present and future generations will have a deeper understanding of our glorious past.

As a testament to his expansive knowledge and appreciation for art, Jay was appointed by President Bush to be chairman of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, a group tasked with directing the government's efforts to protect antiquities around the world.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jay Kislak for his profound